

# Minutes of Saint Brigid's Council Meeting

February 19, 2024

## Minutes

Present: Mary Stamps, Noelle Rollins, Cindy Stubbs, Bev Selby, Alison Hendley, Glenn Harden

Opening prayer.

### 1) Updates

- a) The Lenten retreat on Saturday went well with fourteen attendees from St Brigid's. Feedback has been positive from those who attended.

### 2) Lenten Giving

- a) We have not done a Lenten donation before but an appeal from AIM (Alliance for International Monasticism) was received.
- b) The Council approved a \$500 donation.
  - i) AIM's Lenten appeal will be used for:
    - (1) a mission monastery in Senegal to install solar panels and to repair their host making machine
    - (2) The Benedictine Nuns of Eucharistic King in the Philippines to purchase a car to make deliveries and go to medical appointments
    - (3) the theological studies of a monk in Mexico
    - (4) and nursing studies for a nun in Angola.

### 3) Developing a Leadership Transition Process

- a) A small group will be pulled together to begin the drafting process.
- b) The goal is to have a "spacious" draft to share with the community on April 20<sup>th</sup> at the community call.
  - i) The draft will include various options and rationales to consider.
  - ii) Everyone will have an opportunity to give input and feedback.
- c) The retreat committee asked if they should schedule time to discuss this process at the July retreat.
  - i) It is too premature to make this decision. The question will be revisited after the April 20<sup>th</sup> community call.

### 4) Other

- a) Bev will rotate off Council this year and an election will be held in May.
  - i) A request was made to discuss the community's finance to see if more money could be used for donations.
    - (1) This conversation was tabled until the process for leadership transition is completed.
- b) Deans
  - i) One Dean will be stepping down at the end of the formation year.

Closing prayer.

## Reports

### *Amma's Report*

#### 1. Formation

- Porter Report: Sue sent information to four Inquirers, and has conversations pending with two of them.
- Kris and Noelle have asked to begin the discernment process for monastic profession. They will have weekly meetings with pairs of the professed sisters starting in April. The professed sisters put together a letter for persons who might feel led to discern such a call. (See below.)

#### 2. Leadership Transition Process

- Conversation continues with the Council in response to what we heard at last month's community call.

#### 3. Prayer Book

- The elements of Ordinary Time liturgy of the hours are nearly ready to hand over to the Liturgy Team for compilation. That will probably happen within the next two weeks. Our hope is that we can begin using the settings after Pentecost.

#### 4. Other

- Alison, Dan, Sue, and I attended the blessing Mass for Abbot Douglas at Saint John's Abbey on January 28th. I scanned a copy of the liturgy and posted it to the community for consideration when our time comes to make such a transition in leadership.
- We had excellent attendance at our Feast Day celebration on February 1st, with 20 of our 25 members present.

### **Letter for Persons Discerning Monastic Profession**

Loved one,

If you have progressed so far in your life as an oblate that you now feel led to discern a call to monastic profession, welcome! The professed members of Saint Brigid's are happy to walk alongside you as we listen together for guidance from the Holy Spirit.

Experience has taught us that such a step is best taken after a minimum of five years in final oblation. This time will have given you the opportunity to settle into the rhythm of the monastery by frequent participation in the liturgy of the hours; taking on service roles in the monastery; in-person attendance at our annual retreat at least once or twice; and living out our Covenant to the best of your ability. Such marks suggest that you have the desire and the skills for a lifetime of stability in this community.

Professed members of the monastery hold each other accountable to attending our weekly gathering; to embracing a full living out of the Covenant; and to continuing exemplification of service in the monastery. It might all sound a bit daunting, but it is in truth a profound journey into deeper love of God and one another. (Reflect on RB Prologue 45-50 for glimpses of the joy that is held out before us!)

So, what happens next? You will spend one year of discernment in weekly conversation with your professed sisters [and brothers]. This journey will include shared reading and reflection, along with the promise of continuing daily prayer for you. Think about your life circumstances, as well: Are you in a place to make such a commitment? Are there things going on in your life that consume a large portion of your energy? Do you have any other significant decisions to make at this time? Is your family supportive of your vocation?

If after one year, you and/or the professed members have not reached clarity about whether to continue on the path, that does not necessarily mean the call is not there; it might simply mean "not now." If, however, a shared affirmation of your call is sensed, then it is time for a deep conversation with the amma or abba. The professed members make their recommendation but as in everything else within the monastery, the final decision remains with the spiritual head of the community (cf., e.g., RB 3.2).

May you feel blessed in this holy exploration and may God provide you with every needful grace.

### *Noelle's Report*

Prioress: I continue to meet with Amma about every two weeks. Most recently I helped to gather the RSVPs for our Lenten Retreat and posted an article to begin gathering ideas for our Silver Jubilee next year. I also pulled the conversation on the Leadership Transition process out of the chat function and posted it in articles in our MN council space.

Tech Team: we are continuing our review of the website and making updates to pages. We have completed the home page, about page, and most recently the history page. We are exploring a new payment app and also developing some "how to" articles to be posted in MN. Our blog has been temporarily on hold, and we hope to have it back up again next month.

Group Lectio: Lectio continues once per month with a regular group of attendees.

### *Bev's Report*

The Liturgy Team met on Feb. 5, 2024. Since our last Council meeting, we observed the Feast of St. Brigid, posted Liturgy notes and Compline for Lent through Easter, adjusted

the time that the zoom "Oratory" door opens for silent prayer to 15 min before each Office, but leaving the time for organizing at 5 min before each Office.

The entire team expressed their readiness to help with the community breviary when needed.

Also, we have begun to consider what kind of celebration we would like to have for our community's Silver Jubilee in 2025.

### *Alison's Report*

People's pledges are arriving on schedule on the whole...sometimes the new year creates lags, but this hasn't happened for our monthly pledgers this year.

The winter retreat was \$450 for 15 people to attend. This is paid by the monastery and is a blessing to all who attended.

We have the 2024 support to our leader in full.

Our balance as of Feb 19th is \$4,668. Our balance at the beginning of the year was \$9,000. I anticipate people will begin to pay for retreat in the next month or so.

### *Glenn's Report*

Retreat Committee: The work of the retreat committee continues to be on track.

Questions for Council from the Committee: Do we want time during retreat to discuss the election process? And, if so, who would lead it?

### *Cindy's Report*

I have found a variety of Benedictine opportunities to offer to the community. I continue to seek unique webinars as well as in-person opportunities to post for the community. Any input or guidance would be appreciated if there is a group I should watch for good learning opportunities.

The Front Porch continues to be a place for our brothers and sisters to gather, even during winter months. With the start of Lent, we had our first Soup supper on the Front porch, with five in attendance. This event will continue each Friday evening, and it is completely voluntary (but a lot of fun!).

Janet has asked Cindy to take over card-sending duties and Amma has approved. I have some cards that Janet gave me as well as plenty of cards in my stash. I just need help knowing when/to whom cards are needed.